

Musk Lorikeets at Alfred Cove.—On September 28, 1975 a group of Naturalists' Club members watched a fight between several birds in a tall eucalypt near the Swan River foreshore at Alfred Cove. Two birds fell from a height of thirty or so feet, still fighting, and, when approached, flew off. One was a Twenty-eight Parrot (*Baruwardius zonarius*) and the other a small green lorikeet, clearly not the only endemic south-western species, the Purple-crowned Lorikeet (*Glossopsitta porphyrocephala*). As we watched two lorikeets entered a hollow spout in the tree (an old Flooded Gum, *Eucalyptus rudis*) and shortly afterwards strongly defended their territory from the much larger Twenty-eights. They were identified as Musk Lorikeets (*Glossopsitta concinna*), a species not represented in the West, their normal range being south-eastern Australia. The birds were a male and female in full breeding plumage, bright green with distinctive red and blue facial markings, a bright red bill and yellow on the side of the breast. They continued to ward off the Twenty-eights, flying directly towards them and calling loudly whenever they approached the hollow too closely.

Dr. G. M. Storr, of the W.A. Museum, positively identified the birds from colour photographs taken at the Cove and agreed that the most likely explanation of their presence was as escapees from captivity. However he pointed out that the possibility of the birds having flown unaided from the South-East cannot be ruled out. He has already advanced this explanation for the Rainbow Lorikeets (*Trichoglossus moluccanus*) established at Nedlands (*W. Aust. Nat.*, 12 (5), 1973: 116); incidentally these now occur also at Safety Bay. Neither the Zoological Gardens nor the Avicultural Society could account for the birds' presence.

The lorikeets were regularly seen in the area throughout the months of October and November. Soon after the first sighting they moved to another hollow spout a few feet away in the same tree, this hollow having two entrances. In the meantime a pair of Tree-Martins (*Petrochelidon nigricans*) nested in the original hole. The lorikeets appeared to enter their hollow in the evening to roost, flying in with a fast direct flight on short whirring wings. The call is a piercing shriek.

At the beginning of 1976 a Club member heard what may have been young birds calling from the hollow. Following this up, on March 15 and 22, 1976 (by which time the plumage of the adults had become much less colourful) three birds were seen to enter and leave the hollow, one being markedly duller than the other two in appearance. It seems likely that this represents the first recorded breeding of the Musk Lorikeet in Western Australia.

—BRUCE CORFE, Cairns.

Breeding Records of the Grey Honeyeater.—On October 27, 1975, in the Yalgoo district, B.A.W. found "a small nest of frail structure, attached to the extremity of a horizontal branch of a narrow leaved mulga, about 8 feet from the ground" (cf. Serventy & Whittell, *Birds of Western Australia*, 4th edn., 1967, p. 380, on the Grey Honeyeater, *Lacus-troica whitei*). The nest was completely filled by one well advanced nestling, the most obvious feature of which was a golden ring around the eye, corresponding to the similar feature of the Western Silvereye (*Zosterops later-alis gouldi*).

The nestling was being fed by two small greyish unattractive birds which lacked any interesting or remarkable coloration except for whitish underbody. However when we approached the nest, the birds fluttered to the nearest tree with an aerial display of white feathers, seemingly intended to distract our attention from the nestling.

The birds were seen to feed in association with Yellow-tailed Thornbills (*Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*) and Western warblers (*Gerygone fusca*). In this general company they were easily overlooked. However, their frequent calls were strikingly similar to that of the Western Silvereye.

At the time we failed to recognise the species, but later, the identification as Grey honeyeater was quite obvious.

On November 20, 1975, A.G.W. found another nest with two eggs, approximately one kilometre from the site of the earlier observation. It was just over one metre from the ground, attached to the extremity of a horizontal branch of curara (*Acacia tetragonophylla*). Both exterior and interior aspects of the nests were loosely lined with the white woolly globules of bindi eye (*Bassia* spp.). The eggs were white with reddish-brown markings, and both parents shared the incubation.

During the following week in this locality, we observed other Grey Honeyeaters daily, estimating five pairs in a radius of about one kilometre. Their calls became a familiar sound in the vicinity of our camp. We gained the impression that they were not uncommon, at least in this area, and at that particular time.

Photographs taken at the first nest revealed the slightly down-turned beak of the parents, and also a faint whitish ring around the eye. Neither of these two features was distinguishable to us when using binoculars. Although the birds were seen to carry insects to the nestling, the only food recorded in the photographs appeared to be fruits of a mistletoe, and are shown as being reddish in colour with black markings.

In general profile, the birds were most unlike other honeyeaters. In fact a bird observer on first encountering the species would not seek its identification in the honeyeater section of a field guide!

On August 1, 1976 we camped at the entrance to a valley at the western end of the Hamersley Range, 3 km along an HEX track off the Paraburdoo-Nanutarra road. A pair of Grey Honeyeaters was observed by B.A.W. at close range in a stand of mulga. The birds were seen to copulate twice. Their characteristic call was not heard.

On October 10, 1976 we re-visited the same locality in the Yalgoo district referred to in the opening paragraph of this note. We parked our vehicle about 1 km from our previous campsite, and within a few minutes we both observed a pair of Grey Honeyeaters feeding a well advanced fledgling. No other fledgling was seen. We were at less than 10 metres range and watched the group for some ten minutes as it moved through several mulga trees.

On the following morning, in separate but adjacent localities, each of us observed a lone adult Grey Honeyeater, foraging in company with Yellow-rumped Thornbills mainly in curara bushes and mulga trees.

In all of the above instances identification was positive. We were easily able to note the main characteristics of the species, namely grey upper parts and head, whitish underparts, with a distinct whitish eye ring. The beak had a slight down turn. In flight there was a prominent display of white feathers.

On the latter two occasions the characteristic call, resembling that of the common Western Silvereye was clearly heard in fact it was the call which attracted our attention.

It was worth noting that this area had suffered severely from the prevailing drought. Mulga trees and curara bushes, which formed the main vegetation, appeared to have shed about 50% of their leaves. Grasses and small plants were almost non-existent. It therefore seemed remarkable that in spite of these adverse conditions which followed a good rainfall season in 1975, we were able so easily to find again this small and insignificant honeyeater, and that during our brief visit to Yalgoo, it was the only species of bird of which we saw evidence of breeding.

—A. G. and B. A. WELLS, Scarborough.